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## THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when  
all through the house,  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a  
mouse;

The stockings were hung by the chimney  
with care,  
In hope that St. Nicholas soon would be  
there.

The children were nestled all snug in  
their beds,  
While visions of sugar-plums danced in  
their heads;

And mamma in her 'kerchief and I in my  
cap  
Had settled our brains for a long winter  
nap—

When out on the lawn there arose such a  
clatter  
I sprang from my bed to see what was  
the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
To open the shutters and throw up the  
sash,

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen  
snow  
Gave the lustre of midday to objects  
below;

When what to my wondering eyes  
should appear,  
But a miniature sleigh with eight tiny  
reindeer,

With a little old driver, so lively and  
quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be Saint  
Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they  
came,  
And he whistled and shouted and called  
them by name:

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now  
Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on, Comet! on, Dunder and  
Blixen!"

To the top of the porch, to the top of the  
wall!  
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away  
all!

As dry leaves that before the wild hurri-  
cane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount  
to the sky,

So, up to the housetop the coursers they  
flew,  
With a sleigh full of toys—and St. Nich-  
olas too.

And then in a twinkling I heard on the  
roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little  
hoof.

As I drew in my head and was turning  
around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came  
with a bound!

He was dressed all in fur from his head  
to his foot,  
And his clothes were all tarnished with  
ashes and soot.

A bundle of toys he had hung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler just opening  
his pack;

His eyes, how they twinkled! his dimples,  
how merry!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like  
a cherry;

His droll little mouth was drawn up like  
a bow,  
And the beard on his chin was as white  
as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his  
teeth,  
And the smoke it encircled his head like  
a wreath.

He had a broad face, and a little round  
belly,  
That shook when he laughed like a bowl  
full of jelly;

He was chubby and plump—a right  
jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him in spite  
of myself.

A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to  
dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight  
to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned  
with a jerk,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he  
rose.

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave  
a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the down of  
a thistle;

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove  
out of sight,  
"Merry Christmas to all! and to all  
a good night!"

**AUNT MARY'S CHRISTMAS  
PRESENT.**  
The clerks in the post office at  
P— were busy sorting over the  
evening mail, distributing letters  
and papers as fast as possible.

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Aunt  
Mary, holding up her hand. "The  
poor little dear!" Tears actually  
filled her eyes and ran down her soft  
cheeks.

"That's certainly a provid-  
ence, Dick. I'm sure of it. That  
poor little child is in trouble and  
needs a friend, and the Lord's had  
a hand in it, you may be sure."

"Well, Derby isn't far off, and I  
know just where the 'line kill' is and  
the old tumble-down house near by.  
It will be a jolly lark to play Santa  
Claus in earnest for once. Guess I'll  
try it."

"O, Dick, it will be just splendid!  
Wish I could go, too, but it's too cold.  
You'll make a fine Santa Claus, with  
your long, white whiskers and silvery  
hair. If he should happen to see you  
she'll think you are the genuine old  
fellow himself."

They laughed and chatted over  
the project as they drank their tea.  
It was nearly eleven o'clock when  
he crept quietly around to the back  
door that little Nellie was going to  
leave open a crack. Pushing it gen-  
tly open, he entered the room. There  
was a little blaze from a few dry  
embers in the old cracked stove, and  
by its side he discovered a little stock-  
ing—thin, ragged with the holes  
drawn together with coarse thread in  
a pitiful child fashion. It was pinned  
to the old faded window curtain.

Santa's face worked strangely, and  
a tear or two actually dropped off the  
end of his nose as he bent and start-  
ed up a brighter blaze. He heard  
discordant snore from the adjoining  
room, so he proceeded leisurely to fill  
the little stocking with delicious  
candy, nuts and a bouncing orange  
at the very top. Then the lovely  
baby doll was comfortably arranged  
in her carriage, in cloak and hood,  
with her trunk beside it. The bun-  
dles for Granny Dodd were laid on  
the greasy old table, and Santa Claus  
was smiling and beaming as he  
thought of her amazement when she  
should discover them in the morn-  
ing, and poor little Nellie's delight  
over her treasures, when, to his ex-  
treme consternation, he saw a little  
white-robed figure gliding toward  
him, and the next minute a pair of  
small arms were hugging his portly  
form, and a bright little face, radiant  
with joy, was uplifted to his.

"I knew you would come! O, I  
knew you would come!" she whis-  
pered, and the next minute Santa  
had a little quivering form in his  
arms, and she was showering kisses  
on his face and hugging him with all  
her might.

"O, you dear, blessed, good Santa  
Claus! I knew you would come!"  
and overcome by her joy and excite-  
ment, she hid her face in his long  
flowing beard, and cried and sobbed  
hysterically.

"There, there, dear, hush! Don't  
cry! You'll wake up granny!"  
With a frightened glance toward  
the bedroom, she made a mighty ef-  
fort, and the sobs ceased; but still  
she hung fast to his neck.

"O Santa, dear Santa, take me  
away; take me now! Granny wishes  
I was dead; she says so every day. I'll  
be so good if you'll let me be your  
little girl."

"Bless you dear!" he whispered,  
"what on earth could Santa Claus do  
with a little girl? See look at your  
stocking! See what this is under it!  
Don't touch them to-night you are  
shivering with cold. Go to bed now,  
like a good little child, and you'll be  
as happy as a lark to-morrow with  
your baby doll. She's a beauty, and  
no mistake."

Still the little arms clung fast and  
the small form nestled closer in his  
arms; but the snore were winding  
up in queer, snoring groans, as if  
granny might be waking.

"There, there, dear, granny's wak-  
ing up! You must go. See here! I'll  
come and see you again in the morn-  
ing."

"Will you truly?"  
"Yes, truly."

With one more loving kiss, the  
little one slipped down and glided  
softly away, without even a glance  
at her treasures.

Early the next day Uncle Dick,  
as everybody called him, found his  
way again to the tumble-down house  
by the lime kiln. It did not take  
long to persuade Nellie's granny to  
part with her charge, especially after  
\$50 had been counted out to her.

After the necessary papers had been  
signed, and the new playthings  
packed, a queer little bundle of gray  
shawl and a happy face, with soft  
rings of golden hair framed in a  
faded old hood, was snugly tucked  
under the fur robes, and with a ju-  
bilate jingle of silvery bells, away  
they flew toward the city.

As soon as Nellie could fairly get  
her breath, she said: "Are you really  
Santa Claus? and where are we go-  
ing now?"

"No, dear; I'm only Uncle Dick—  
Uncle Dick Marvin—and I'm going  
to take you home with me. I'll have  
to tuck you into one of Aunt Mary's  
stockings for a Christmas present.  
Won't she be surprised?"

But his brown eyes twinkled so  
merrily it was evident he had no fear  
that Aunt Mary would say, as he

usual: "It's just splendid! It's a  
Providence, Dick!"

"Well, I don't care where we are  
going, if I may only stay with you  
and be your little girl."

The sleepless night and unusual  
excitement was too much for the lit-  
tle one. Long before they reached  
the city Nellie was fast asleep. Uncle  
Dick carried her in and laid her in  
Aunt Mary's arms.

"I've brought you a Christmas  
present, Mary, a gift of God to us  
both, for she is to be our child now."

Aunt Mary folded the little sleeper  
tenderly to her heart, with a glad  
look of joy on her face, and, after  
snuggly tucking her away in bed, hur-  
ried back to hear the wonderful story  
of Uncle Dick's experience at play-  
ing Santa Claus.—Mrs. A. W. Curtis,  
in Times of Refreshing.

## THE HYMN "ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS."

When Stanley was exploring in  
Africa, and his party had been in  
great danger, having had severe fight-  
ing, Frank Pocock, a member of it,  
broke into song, as follows:

The true home-land! I long to meet  
Those who have gone before;  
The weeping eyes and weary feet  
Rest on that happy shore.

Mr. Stanley said: "Frank, you will  
make every boy cry with such tunes  
as that. Choose some heroic tune."  
All right, sir, he replied, and struck  
up—

Brightly beams our banner,  
Pointing to the sky,  
Waving its heroes onward  
To their home on high.

"Ah, Frank," said Mr. Stanley,  
"it isn't the heavenward way you  
mean, is it? I should think you  
would prefer the homeward way.  
Frank, you are thinking too much  
of the poor fellows we have lately  
lost. Sing, my dear Frank, your  
best song."

He responded by singing—  
Onward, Christian soldiers.  
Mr. Stanley saw that he was in a  
serious and religious frame of mind,  
and refrained from urging him  
further.

One of the most curious facts in  
the history of the hymn and tune is  
that during the troubles of the  
Armenians a few years ago it caused  
Government action, owing to the  
Turkish suspicion of hymns. The  
ignorant Moslems could not under-  
stand the martial spirit of "Onward,  
Christian Soldiers," and interpreted  
the exhortation to "Christian  
soldiers" in the literal sense, as  
meaning to fight the Turk. There-  
fore it was regarded as revolutionary  
language and prohibited, after the  
manner of the Index Expurgatorius  
of the Pope.

**Kitchener as Lieut.-General.**  
LONDON, Dec. 30.—The Cab-  
inet recommended to Queen Victoria  
that she make Major-General Lord  
Kitchener a lieutenant-general, so  
as to enable him to take over the  
supreme command in South Africa,  
when Lord Roberts leaves the country.

At the time it was predicted  
that when Kitchener got into the  
saddle there will be an unbroken  
silence from headquarters, and such  
"police work" as remains to be done  
will pass without observation.

If Kitchener's plan of "police  
work" is accurately outlined by the  
London Daily Express, the British  
public may well hope that he will  
drop the veil between the annexed  
Dutch territory and the rest of the  
world. In describing what it terms  
Kitchener's "drastic" policy, the  
Express says the hero of Omdurman  
will endeavor to isolate the com-  
mandoes and to move suspected Boer  
families into garrisoned towns; will  
clear troublesome districts, confining  
the population in laager, if necessary,  
and will take or destroy all food sup-  
plies, punish treachery by death or  
transportation, raze villages guilty of  
treasonable acts, and destroy all farms  
in the vicinity of railway or tele-  
graph cutting.

The wonderful activity and recent  
successes of the Boers have, however,  
disappointed many of the Kitchener  
admirers.

**A King's Fear of Woman's Beauty.**  
The great Charles XII, of Sweden,  
like many another man in the his-  
tory of the world, and even at this  
present day, feared only one power in  
the world, the power of beauty; only  
a handsome woman could boast of  
making him quail—he put him to  
flight. He said: "So many heroes  
have succumbed to a beautiful  
face! Did not Alexander burn a  
town to please a ridiculous court-  
san? I want my life to be free from  
such weakness; history must not find  
such a stain upon it." He was told  
one day that a young girl had come  
to sue for justice on behalf of a blind  
octogenarian father, maltreated by  
soldiers. The first inclination of the  
King, a strict disciplinarian, was to  
rush straight to the plaintiff, to hear  
the details of the misdemeanor for  
himself, but suddenly stopping he  
asked, "Is she good looking?" And  
being assured that she was both very  
young and unusually lovely, he sent  
word that she must wear a veil,  
otherwise he would not listen to her.

## THE MAN WHO TIPPED.

He tipped the man who took his hat,  
The man who took his cane,  
The chambermaid, the bell-boy, and  
The porter on the train.

He tipped his hat to all the girls,  
And he tipped to all the men;  
He tipped the beam at two fifteen,  
'Till tippin' made him thin.

He gave a friend a "dead-sure tip,"  
And when that lost the race,  
His friend let fly another tip,  
Which found a stopping place.

And then he took to tippin';  
Was tippin' night and day;  
He tipped right and left, until  
His money passed away.

And now he drives an ash cart,  
And when he makes a trip,  
He empties out the load so as  
To give the cart a tip.

(Continued.)  
**Will the Coming Convention Be  
Called Upon to Solve the Problem  
of Government With-  
out Taxation?**

Taxation is not considered one of  
the chief joys of this life by the  
masses, but rather as an evil, and it  
is therefore not strange that individ-  
uals with similar interest should, in  
this age of combinations and trusts,  
combine into classes seeking by leg-  
islation to evade one of the respon-  
sibilities of citizenship.

If one class with a special plea is  
released from taxation, another class  
will demand and obtain the same  
exemption, and in course of a short  
time we shall find all classes demand-  
ing an exemption from taxation, and  
these demands will have to be  
granted, for no state has the favor to  
except one neighbor from taxation  
and at the same time tax the life out  
of another. One class with a lobby,  
representing every county and city  
in the state thoroughly entrenched  
and fortified, will attack the legisla-  
tive hall in Richmond this winter,  
asking the abolition of the license  
for physicians upon the ground of  
the large amount of charity work  
they perform.

Of course our friends the lawyers  
will not be bashful in presenting  
their claims for exemption, for  
doubtless they believe they perform  
a large lot of charity work, and can  
no doubt convince our M. D.'s that  
when it comes to charity work the  
doctor must take second place. The  
hotel men will think they ought to  
be exempt, for don't they do some  
charity work? The horsemen will  
also ask to be exempt for don't they  
have charity debts also? The fisher-  
men will think they ought to be  
exempt, for are they not doing charity  
work when they sell herring at 10  
cents per hundred on credit?

The farmers will demand exemp-  
tion from taxation for they know  
beyond a shadow of a doubt that as  
a class they are doing more charity  
work than all other classes combined,  
for are we not feeding the world  
often at a big loss?

If one class is taxed let all classes  
be. If one or two favored classes  
are exempted from taxation let all be.  
The attempt to raise up privileged  
classes should not be made, unless  
all are to have the right or govern-  
ment without taxation; and in that  
event the convention must solve the  
problem of "Government without  
taxation." FARMER JO.

## THE HERO OF PEKIN.

The Methodist missionaries in  
Pekin refused to seek the protection  
of the strong walls and buildings of  
the British ambassador's residence  
and grounds unless their Christian  
Chinese were also admitted. It  
turned out during the siege that the  
labor of these Chinese in erecting  
fortifications saved all the foreigners  
and themselves.

It may be well to say that all par-  
ties give to the American missionary,  
Gamewell, the credit of engineering  
the barricades and defenses that kept  
the Chinese at bay. Colonel Scott,  
of the British Royal Engineers, after  
the capture of Pekin, examined  
Gamewell's works and said to him:  
"You are worthy of a place in the  
Royal Engineers." He was not only  
apt with the picks and plans, but he  
directed the defense. The British  
Minister said if he ever again were  
in such a tight place he hoped for a  
Gamewell, who had tasted war in our  
civil conflict.

## LOTS OF USEFUL THINGS.

A little salt sprinkled on a hot stove  
will remove any disagreeable odor.

Burnt corn with the cob makes  
the best charcoal for hens. Twice a  
week is often enough to feed it.

If a small piece of bread is put up-  
on the point of the knife while peel-  
ing and cutting onions it will pre-  
vent the tears from flowing.

Timber cut between October and  
April has greater value—especially  
for water-resisting purposes—than  
that felled in summer, on account  
of the starch which fills the cells  
during the period of rest and makes  
the wood close and impenetrable.  
The starch particles do not appear  
in the wood in summer.

The sweet Italian or Bermuda  
onions are the ones to be eaten  
unseasoned, their flavor being much

more delicate than the common  
varieties. But onions are really  
sweeteners of the breath after the  
local effects have passed away, as  
they correct stomach disorders and  
carry off the accumulated poisons of  
the system. They provide a blood  
purifier that all may safely use, and  
do perfect work in constipation  
troubles. As a vermifuge the onion  
cannot be surpassed, and, eaten raw,  
will often check a violent cold in the  
head. One small onion eaten every  
night before retiring is a well-known  
doctor's prescription for numerous  
affections of the head and is highly  
recommended for sleeplessness; it acts  
on the nerves in a soothing manner  
without the injurious effects of drugs  
so often applied. The heart of an  
onion, heated and placed in the ear,  
will often relieve the agony of ear-  
ache, while the syrup procured from  
sprinkling a sliced onion with sugar  
and baking in an oven will work  
wonders in a "croupy child."

## AN ISCARIO OF THE HERD.

In all the great slaughter houses  
where thousands of beef cattle are  
converted into army rations, there  
are trained and employed decoy  
animals whose sole occupation is  
leading their kind to the shambles.

The old-time drover used to ride  
behind his steers and force them  
with blows and goads to their doom.  
But not so to-day. It is found much  
more efficacious to take advantage  
of the natural trustfulness of the poor  
dumb creatures in those of their own  
order. So in each yard there is kept  
an ox, called by the driver "Judas  
Iscariot," who slowly and enticingly  
walks before the newly arrived drove,  
along the chutes and up the elevated  
bridges, to the killing room. Just  
before his arrival at the end the  
decoy steps aside and the following  
multitude falls under the axe. Al-  
though he is only a brute trained to  
his bloody business, every man and  
boy in the stockyards hates him.

But the miserable four-footed  
traveller is an angel of light compared  
with the man who is luring on the  
trustful youth, hope of home and  
darling of his mother's heart, to his  
sure death and final damnation. And  
every boy who grows to manhood,  
whether in city or country, must  
meet more than one "procureur to  
the lords of hell."—Chicago Inter-  
ior.

## A Clever Crayon.

We have had in admiration the  
gift of the Rev. E. F. Hall, of Orange,  
with a crayon. "We could enrich the  
Advocate, if the means for engravings